

chat—with social workers who can offer confidential crisis intervention, information, and referrals to emergency, social service, and support resources.

The National Child Abuse Help Hotline Act would provide a meaningful Federal investment to protect children across the country, authorizing \$2 million annually for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to award a grant to a nonprofit entity to support a 24-hour, national, toll-free telephone hotline. That hotline will get information and assistance to victims of child abuse or neglect, parents, caregivers, mandated reporters, and other concerned community members. This will not interfere with any state-mandated reporter hotlines and will bolster those state efforts. In fact, the current operator has more than 80 community partners in just Maine alone.

Mr. President, child abuse is preventable, and the helpline's prevention and intervention activities are both successful and well-documented. Consistent Federal support for the National Child Abuse Hotline will improve our ability to reach children of all ages, as well as parents or caregivers, during the pandemic and beyond. I urge my colleagues to support the adoption of this important legislation that could save lives.

#### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

##### SENATE RESOLUTION 127—ELECTING KAREN H. GIBSON AS SERGEANT AT ARMS AND DOORKEEPER OF THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 127

*Resolved*, That Karen H. Gibson of Bozeman, Montana be, and she is hereby, elected Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate.

##### SENATE RESOLUTION 128—NOTIFYING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ELECTION OF A SERGEANT AT ARMS AND DOORKEEPER OF THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 128

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives be notified of the election of the Honorable Karen H. Gibson as Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate.

##### SENATE RESOLUTION 129—NOTIFYING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF THE ELECTION OF A SERGEANT AT ARMS AND DOORKEEPER OF THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 129

*Resolved*, That the President of the United States be notified of the election of the Honorable Karen H. Gibson as Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate.

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I have a request for one committee to meet during today's session of the Senate. It has the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committee is authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

##### COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Monday, March 22, 2021, at 6 p.m., to conduct a closed hearing.

#### PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask unanimous consent that my Judiciary Committee detailee, Joseph Routh, be given privileges of the floor for the remainder of the 117th Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—H.J. RES. 17

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I understand there is a joint resolution at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the joint resolution by title for the first time.

The senior assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 17) removing the deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading, and in order to place the joint resolution on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The joint resolution will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

#### ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2021

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Tuesday, March 23; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; that upon the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the

nomination of Shalanda Young to be the Deputy Director of OMB; further, that the cloture motions filed during Thursday's session of the Senate ripen at 11:45 a.m., and if cloture is invoked on the Young nomination, all postcloture time expire at 2:15 p.m.; finally, that the Senate recess following the cloture vote on the Young nomination until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly caucus meetings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. For the information of Senators, we expect to have four rollcall votes during Tuesday's session of the Senate in relation to the Young and Murthy nominations.

#### ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order following the remarks of Senator PORTMAN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Ohio.

#### IMMIGRATION

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I thank the majority leader, and I thank the Presiding Officer for allowing me to speak this evening.

I just returned from the southern border and want to give a brief report and talk about some potential ways forward to deal with what is happening on the Mexican border. I went with Secretary of Homeland Security Mayorkas and also with the chair of the Homeland Security Committee, my colleague from Michigan, and also with my colleague from West Virginia and my colleague from Connecticut, who are the chairs and ranking members of the Senate Homeland Security Appropriations Committee. We had a bipartisan group and those of us who were involved on the authorizing side and on the appropriations side.

You probably heard that the situation is bad, and it is. There is a record number of unaccompanied children coming to our border today, being let in, and ending up in Border Patrol detention facilities.

Just yesterday, CBP reported that there were more than 15,500 unaccompanied kids in Federal custody. That is a record. But it is not just children. More than 100,000 migrants were apprehended in February alone. This is a 15-year record, representing a 28-percent increase just since January. All the numbers from March look even higher. We won't know the final numbers for another couple of weeks, but the point is, it is getting worse, not better.

These numbers, by the way, are worse than the previous two surges at our southern border—both the 2014 surge, we all remember, during the Obama administration and the 2019 surge during the Trump administration. And, by the way, we have yet to

reach the predicted peak because that normally would happen in April and May. In fact, the Secretary of Homeland Security, Alejandro Mayorkas, who was with us on this trip, said that he believes this will be the worst year in 20 years for unlawful entry into the United States.

However, the numbers only tell part of the story. This is also a humanitarian crisis. Migrants often face violence, sickness, and tough terrain on their dangerous journey north—predominantly, those from the Northern Triangle countries of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador. Many are abused by the smugglers who charge them large amounts of money and bring them.

Unfortunately, this is a crisis that could have been avoided. On day one, the Biden administration issued five Executive orders to overturn Trump policies and since has taken more than a half dozen additional actions to dismantle policies from the previous administration.

These included a 100-day pause on all deportations; no longer using the COVID-19 healthcare emergency under title 42 of the United States Code to turn away unaccompanied children and some families; suspending the construction of the border fence and technologies, such as sensors and scanners used by the Trump administration to help our overworked Border Patrol agents secure key stretches of our southern border; and abandoning the migrant protection protocols, also known as “Remain in Mexico,” which required some asylum seekers at the southern border to remain in Mexico rather than in the United States while their claim for asylum is being processed; and, of course, proposing an amnesty bill on day one.

The administration has every right to do that, but it creates a disincentive to push back on new migrants coming in who are trying to get into the United States before that amnesty might become law. It certainly does unless you also make it clear that you don't qualify for amnesty unless you are already here. And I think that is an important message that I hope will be part of any future discussions about any kind of an amnesty bill so it doesn't encourage more people to come.

The Biden administration took these and other actions that incentivize people to head north but then said: Please don't come yet. We are not ready for you.

It was no surprise that didn't work. An unprecedented number of children and families came to take advantage of the new policies. As I heard on the southern border over the last few days, actions speak louder than words. And the actions of the new administration were clear.

These abrupt moves to dismantle the immigration policies that were working to provide a disincentive for unlawful migrations hit the green light to a lot of people seeking a better life, but

it also gave the smugglers and the human trafficking groups in the Northern Triangle and in Mexico the ability to convince more families and more children to take the dangerous trip north. It gave them a narrative, and, of course, they used it to their full advantage. That has overwhelmed Border Patrol and our immigration system, in general, unequipped to handle the surge.

I heard directly from Border Patrol agents about how the current surge of unaccompanied kids is draining resources and endangering not just those vulnerable kids but the security of our own border.

It was stunning to see people who unlawfully crossed the border during a ride-along patrol I joined on Thursday night. People just kept coming. The Border Patrol told me they are seeing an increase of about 150 to 200 percent of illegal entries in the El Paso sector, with many illegal crossers escaping into the United States because they have not apprehended them.

Just as concerning, they told me unaccompanied children and families are being used by the smugglers as a distraction so the smugglers can more easily move dangerous and illicit substances across the border into our communities.

While the Border Patrol is busy processing the kids and the families, which takes a while, the smugglers move. In fact, Customs and Border Protection has reported an increase of 360 percent in seizures of the deadly synthetic opioid fentanyl, which is 50 times deadlier than heroin.

There is no question that more of this is now coming across the border. It is already resulting in a surge of overdose deaths, by the way, over the past year during the COVID-19 pandemic. In my home State of Ohio and around the country, it looks like, sadly, we are in for a record year of overdose and overdose deaths, primarily from fentanyl and fentanyl being mixed with other drugs.

Fentanyl used to come from China directly, mostly through our mail system. Now, increasingly, it is coming from Mexico, since we passed legislation here to stop it coming through our mail system.

Down at the border, I also had the opportunity to visit with the facilities where they are currently holding unaccompanied kids. These children are being kept in tightly packed facilities, supervised by overworked Border Patrol agents, law enforcement, who should be out in the field.

Due to a lack of space for children in the Department of Health and Human Services facilities, Border Patrol is having to detain unaccompanied kids for an average of about 137 hours, nearly double the 72-hour limit required by law.

I am concerned about the well-being of these kids, as we all are, because when the system gets overwhelmed, people, and especially the kids, suffer.

And the processing system right now is overwhelmed; it is overcrowded; it is irresponsible. It is a situation you would never want your own children to be in. Not only are these children crammed into the facilities that are, by their own rules and regulations, overcrowded, there is no testing for COVID-19 in these facilities. Current policy is going to result in tens of thousands more children being released into our communities, waiting for their immigration court cases.

During previous surges at the border that overwhelmed our immigration system, HHS stopped doing background checks on sponsors for unaccompanied kids, and many fell into the custody of abusive human traffickers. In 2014, for example, HHS placed Guatemalan children with criminals who put the children into forced labor on an egg farm in my home State of Ohio, where they were forced to live and work in squalid conditions.

It is an issue I have worked a long time on. Between 2015 and to 2020, as chair of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, I led three bipartisan reports and hearings across two administrations that found repeated failures by the Federal Government to ensure the well-being of these vulnerable children once they were handed off to sponsors, as well as the fundamental refusal by HHS to accept that they were responsible for the welfare of these kids they placed with adults who are not their legal parent or guardian.

Obviously, we are going to see a lot more pressure to get these kids out to as many sponsors as quickly as possible, and, again, I believe we are going to have some of these problems.

Last week, I introduced bipartisan legislation called the Responsibility for Unaccompanied Minors Act that will direct the Federal Government to meet the stringent requirements necessary to ensure children are not abused or exploited by their sponsors; that they show up for their asylum hearings to determine their eligibility to stay in the United States. These are necessary steps to address the current crisis at our border and safeguard these children.

By the way, on the debate as to whether to call the chaos at the border a crisis or not, when I was on the border talking to Border Patrol agents, one of them told me, although he believes it is a crisis, that he is fine not calling it a crisis now because he knows it is going to get much worse, and he wants to have something to call it then. He wants to see, like all Americans, concrete actions and a change of course at the border, much more than having a debate about words. By the way, we should all sympathize with those migrants who want a better life for their families. I sympathize with them. I am sure we all do.

There are millions of people around the world who want to come to our country. We have a legal immigration system that accepts a million people a

year. In addition to that, we accept refugees and those who apply for asylum. At the end of the day, those individuals coming to our southern border right now are making a rational choice to come to the border based on policy decisions by the Biden administration. What we need is a legal, orderly, and proper system to be sure the people follow the rules.

The bottom line is, what I saw at the border is unsustainable, and, unfortunately, it is going to get worse. We are working against the clock to try to find a way forward.

When the Biden administration changed the rules and dismantled the existing provisions that were keeping people from coming across the border, they could have put their own policies in place to try to deal with what everybody predicted was a surge that was coming. They didn't. More to the point, even if they weren't going to put their own policies in place, they should surely have waited until they had the facilities ready to handle the surge. They didn't. That is why you see this terrible overcrowding at Border Patrol detention facilities, holding these kids much longer than they should, and why you see HHS not having the beds prepared that they should have.

By the way, some have said the Trump administration dismantled the asylum system. Well, because of the rules they had in place, there were very few people coming to apply for asylum. The facility I saw, which was a modern facility built just last year with \$48 million of our taxpayer money, was built to try to deal with the next surge. Unfortunately, it is not big enough, and, again, it is overcrowded, so you have kids sleeping on the floor on thin foam mattresses with only a space blanket. None of them have been checked for COVID. They are living not 6 feet apart, as we are required to do here with social distancing, but inches apart and together.

It is one thing to say we are going to change all these policies. It is another thing to say we are not going to put anything in its place or because that is OK—we are OK to have a surge come—at least to be prepared for that surge, and that is not what is happening.

I believe there is a path forward for the Biden administration and the Congress to address this crisis in the short term; then work on medium- and long-term solutions to lower the risk of future surges.

Here is what I would propose. First and foremost, the Biden administration should recommit to enforcing our immigration laws by providing overwhelmed Border Patrol agents and our Immigration and Customs the help they need to be able to ensure they can get what they need to be able to enforce the law. That means better pay for our Border Patrol. It also means better overtime provisions. We have legislation to do that.

It also means ensuring that they have the tools they need to be able to

protect the country. That means not stopping construction of the fence, which, by the way, is almost done. In the El Paso sector, I think there is 150 miles of fence totally—in total, 124 miles is already done. The parts that are not done, unfortunately, are some of the gates, so you have gaps. Border Patrol are very frustrated by this because they literally have to have people at the gaps because they can't monitor them as they can with the fence because with the fence, it takes people a while to get over the fence. With monitoring devices, which are, to me, more important even than the fence itself, they are able to do their jobs.

They are also being told they can't continue the technology, so although there is 124 miles of fencing, there is much less technology than that. Yet they have been stopped from doing that as well.

Let's give them what they need to be able to do their jobs. They are in an impossible situation. I am not talking about a new fence or a new wall, but at least for the part that has already been appropriated by Congress, let's complete it. Let's not leave these gaps.

I literally saw the supplies they have. Construction material is on the ground, and the Border Patrol agents told me—these are rank-and-file Border Patrol agents: This is bad for morale. We see this stuff right there. If that could be put up to take the place of the temporary fencing migrants are able to simply push over or walk through, that would make our jobs much easier.

No. 2, the asylum system needs to be changed immediately. Now, with a backlog of 1.2 million asylum seekers, they are waiting several years for court hearings to find out if they are qualified. During that time, they are living in the United States and often vanishing into the United States. We know from the data we have—and, by the way, the data is not very good on this—that only about half of them, maybe more or maybe less, are even showing up for their court cases. We know this because, for about 48 percent of those who are seeking asylum, there are now removal orders out for them for not showing up for their hearings. So about half of them have removal orders to be removed from the country because they haven't shown up for their hearings. Remember, this is a 1.2 million-person backlog, so it may be 3, 4, 5, 6 years before they get to their court cases. Is there any wonder some of these people are not showing up?

Finally, at the very end of the process, after you go through all the adjudication, guess what the percentage of success would be for someone to achieve an asylum status: only 15 percent—15 percent—have a successful claim. So people are being told to go into the country and await their court cases, and 1.2 million people are doing that. It takes several years for that to happen. At the end of the day, only 15 percent will get asylum.

Yet, again, many are not being removed even though there is a removal order out on them because the immigration system is overwhelmed, so they are focusing on those who have a criminal record, which I understand. This means, if you don't have a criminal record and you are in the United States, you know that it is unlikely you will actually be removed even if there is a removal order for you.

So one policy change would be to simply resume a practice that was started in the last administration as a pilot and ended in November 2020. It is called the Prompt Asylum Claim Review process. An efficient and timely determination of who is eligible for asylum and who is not would really help. It would enable us to start reducing the number of migrants being held in custody and deter migrants who do not have a valid claim.

You might say: Why not start with the 1.2 million backlog? That would be great. We should do that as well. We need more immigration judges. We need more lawyers involved in the process, on both sides, representing those who have the claim and representing the government. That would be good, but in the meantime, these rapid adjudications on the border with due process would have the effect of deterring the next migrant. Think about it. If you are just dealing with the last person on the list, the person who comes in most recently gets more of a deterrent than if you are dealing with the person who came in 4 or 5 years ago because they think: Well, if I get up there and make my claim and come into the United States and go out into one of the communities represented in this body, it will be 4 or 5 years before my court case comes up. Perhaps there will be amnesty during that period or something else or perhaps I will just stay.

If you come to the border and you seek amnesty—you seek asylum—your claim will be adjudicated immediately, and you may receive asylum or you may not. Again, 15 percent is the number now. That is the best number we have, and that is from 2019. We don't have the numbers from 2020 yet. Most think that is about what it will be.

I think this is a good system. I don't know why it was ended in the Trump administration back in November. It shouldn't have been. I hope the new administration will take it up.

As part of this, my colleagues from Texas and Arizona, Senator CORNYN and Senator SINEMA, have suggested we stand up multiple regional processing centers to rapidly and fairly conduct asylum cases in one location. I support that. I think this idea is consistent with what I am talking about to discourage illegal immigration and to ensure that we have a quick decision with regard to asylum. Have all the Federal Agencies together—Border Patrol, Customs and Border Protection, ICE, the Justice Department, HHS—everybody together in one place, and quickly

make these decisions so that people aren't held for a long period of time, so they can have the decision made.

I think it is worth the funding because it will be expensive. It will be expensive to hire the new immigration judges to have the system set up, but it is well worth it, in my view.

Third, to deal with the asylum process, the Biden administration should look at the new Migrant Protection Protocols or "Remain in Mexico" policy. "Remain in Mexico" allowed us to keep our detention center populations down in the United States and asylum seekers close to the immigration courts while officials sorted out the claims. Getting rid of the policy served only to overcrowd our temporary housing and sent a lot more people into the interior, awaiting a hearing by an immigration judge.

There are concerns about "Remain in Mexico" in terms of the conditions at some of the camps in Mexico. Although nongovernmental organizations play a substantial role there already, perhaps for those who are still in that process—and there are probably 45,000 people who are still in that process; there were initially maybe less, but, initially, there were about 75,000 people—a lot of people have just gone home because they don't want to remain in Mexico for their asylum claim. They would rather go back to their home in Northern Triangle countries—Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador—but for those who are there, perhaps there should be more oversight of those camps and more Federal funding provided through the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, HCR, and others to ensure those conditions are better.

What the Biden administration is doing now is saying "We are going to stop the program," and they are bringing people over the border. I saw this, the processing center. About 350 or 450 people a day are leaving the "Remain in Mexico," the Migrant Protection Protocols Program, and coming into the United States. Those people are given the ability to come into the interior, so they are coming into communities in the United States.

One thing you would hope they would get would be a notice as they go through the processing that says: Here is your court date. You have to show up at this court date.

What we have learned in the last several days or what I learned down at the border is that they are not being given those court dates. They are given a piece of paper that has 24 ICE offices in the major metropolitan areas in America, and they are told: We don't know where you are going to end up. We don't know where you are going. You are welcome in the United States, but wherever you are going, please check into the ICE office in your region.

My hope is we can at least get a system together where we don't, again, dismantle a program until we have something in its place to ensure people are going to their court dates to be

able to have the asylum claims dealt with.

On my trip to the border, I asked a reporter to come with me to the border wall because I believe it is important that the public know what is going on. I was surprised to learn that was the first time this reporter or other reporters had been able to kind of see what was going on for quite a while. They haven't been able to come into any of the detention facilities, including the processing center I talked about earlier, where the kids are crammed into—100 kids crammed into 1 room. I think the press should be able to see that because I think that will provide more transparency for all of us.

My constituents don't know what is going on at the border, in part because the media haven't had that level of access. I know we have to protect the confidentiality of individual migrants, and I get that. I think that should be done. I think it can be done, but also by letting the media have that access, we would be able to have more transparency about the realities of what is going on along the border.

So, fourth, I think the Biden administration should invest in finishing the work on the fence, as I said, but they should also work to enact something that is even more important than a fence, and that is to relieve the magnet. This is going to involve Congress.

We did pass an immigration bill in this body with a strong provision called E-Verify several years ago. It basically says that for employers, there will be a sanction if you hire somebody who is not legal. The difference between E-Verify and some of the earlier programs that attempted to do that unsuccessfully is that E-Verify lets us use the new technologies we now have to ensure that fraudulent documents that are often used can be determined to be fraudulent. In other words, you can use technology—facial recognition and so on—to ensure that the employer knows for sure whether the person is legal or not.

Again, this requires some Federal funding. Some of that software for small businesses, in particular, may be expensive, but to have an E-Verify Program that says you mandatorily—by the way, it is not mandatory right now either. It doesn't have the technology. It is not mandatory. You have to make it mandatory and say: If you want to hire somebody, you have to run them through the system. Make it as easy as possible to use the technology.

In talking to the migrants I met—and my colleagues have spoken to many people who have come to this country, and I am sure they have had the same experience—when I asked them why they are coming here, they all have the same answer, basically, with slight variations, which is, as one guy told me from Guatemala, he can make 10 times as much money here. He cares about his family and their future. The economy is much better here, but that is because he knows he can get a

job probably with a document, either a driver's license or a Social Security card that will be fraudulent, but he can buy it for 25 bucks. So we need a system here to stop the magnet.

Don't put the Border Patrol and all of those involved—the immigration system is in such an impossible position that we have a wide-open system here where anybody can come and work.

Let's do E-Verify. That is more important to me than any other enforcement tool that we have. Federal Reserve economists found that States that mandate the use of E-Verify reduce the number of likely unauthorized immigrants who stay in that State. Of course it does.

Sixth—and this is the final one—the Biden administration should work with our Central American partners, including the Governments of Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, to discourage unlawful migration. They can do that by incentivizing migrants to apply for asylum in their countries of origin. Some have said this should be mandatory. To me, that seems to make sense. Maybe there is a reason it shouldn't be mandatory, but it certainly should be encouraged, and these countries should certainly offer this.

We should provide more aid to the countries of Central America because there is a push factor. Everything I have talked about so far is the pull factors, bringing them in. But if we do that, that aid ought to be conditioned on them helping us to provide people the ability to seek asylum in their own country. Where they have such a fear of persecution that they can't do it in their own country, they should be able to do it in a third country.

There was a program started in the Trump administration that never really got off the ground, and it was called Safe Third Country. The program with Guatemala was starting to work. Honduras and El Salvador had signed up, but it hadn't started to work yet. Mexico didn't provide it. But what it says basically is, if you cross through a third country, you have to seek asylum in that third country.

Specifically with Guatemala—as you know, you have to go through Guatemala coming from Honduras or El Salvador or Ecuador or elsewhere. Why not have the asylum claims done there? Again, due process, yes, but don't make people take this long and treacherous journey up to the southern border of the United States. Don't make them go through this process of the detention facilities and so on. Have them seek asylum in their own country or in other countries. That, to me, seems like it makes a lot of sense.

The Biden administration suspended the Safe Third Country program on February 6, shortly after the inauguration.

One program they would like to restart that I think makes sense is called the Central American Minors Program. They are going to restart that program

now, starting in March. This is a program where, during the Obama administration, if you had a family member, a parent—it had to be a parent or a guardian—in the United States legally, then you could come through this program called CAM, Central American Minors Program. I am glad they have restarted that program. That makes sense. I will tell you, over 5 years, only 3,500 kids were processed in that program. Again, your parent has to be in the United States legally. There are 3,500 kids coming across our border every 9 days right now. So the program is not going to solve all our problems, but it will help, and that is a good idea.

We need to take a hard look at all of this, at all of these pull factors we talked about and certainly at the push factors.

I will say that the Biden administration has proposed \$4 billion to go to these three countries—Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras. As a Congress, we have appropriated and \$3.6 billion has been spent in the last 5 years in these three countries. So we have done almost that much in the last 5 years, and yet, because of the corruption, because of the lack of transparency, because of the lack of rule of law, the money has not been as effectively spent as it

should have been. So we have to be sure the money is conditioned upon reforms to actually improve the lives of the individuals in those countries. Despite the corruption, we need to cut through that and say: If you take this money, you have to commit to the reforms. Second, again, it should be contingent upon helping with our asylum system to be sure that we can deal with this surge that we are now facing.

If the Biden administration takes these six recommended actions I have laid out today, I believe we would move toward bringing a quicker end to this crisis on the border, and we would be able to secure our southern border with regard to the drugs that are coming over and other contraband and be able to say that we, together, worked on this.

I know this is a time where everybody is in their corner, the Republicans and Democrats, and it is impossible, it seems like, to make progress. But I think these are pretty sensible ideas, and the alternative is a bad one: that this is going to get worse. You will have more and more kids in detention centers. You will have more and more families released to communities in the United States where they don't come forward for their hearings. And it

is something that discourages people about our immigration system. It just doesn't seem to work. It is certainly not working on the border today.

So my hope is that these ideas or others—maybe others in this Chamber have better ideas, but hopefully they can be bipartisan, and we can get some of this stuff done and actually deal with the crisis we all know exists and we have a responsibility to face.

I yield the floor.

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#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:50 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, March 23, 2021, at 10 a.m.

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#### CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate March 22, 2021:

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

MARTIN JOSEPH WALSH, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE SECRETARY OF LABOR.